

September 8, 2003

**ALERT!**  
**Important Information**

TO: Chief School Administrator  
School Principal

FROM: Isaac R. Bryant, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Student Services

SUBJECT: Preliminary School Status under the *No Child Left Behind* Accountability Requirements

On January 8, 2002, the federal education law, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was signed by President Bush and became effective immediately. A cornerstone of this new law is accountability. The new accountability requirements under NCLB were built on the foundation laid under the former *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA).

Under IASA, 259 New Jersey schools were identified as "in need of improvement" or Category I status. At that time, another 107 schools were notified that they fell into Categories II and III. These schools were advised that their performance would be monitored closely to assess continued improvement.

This memo is to alert you that the review of 2002 state assessment data for the 107 Category II and III schools shows one or more schools in your district did not meet the IASA accountability standards in 2002. See attached *Preliminary Accountability Warning List – Status Report 2002*. Specifically:

- The school did not reach their adequate yearly progress (AYP) improvement target; and
- Performance in one or both content areas (language arts literacy and mathematics) shows 50% or more students scored as partially proficient.

The state assessment data for 2003 is currently being analyzed. If these schools on the attached list again did not meet AYP as defined under NCLB, they will enter the first year of "improvement" status.

Following are the requirements for **Title I schools** that are in their first year of school improvement:

- Schools must receive technical assistance from the district to address the academic achievement problem that caused the school to be identified for improvement. The district is required to provide technical assistance as the school develops and implements the improvement plan.
- Each school identified for improvement must develop a two-year school improvement plan in consultation with parents, school staff, the district, and other experts. The plan must incorporate scientifically based strategies, professional development, extended learning time, strategies to promote effective parental involvement and mentoring of new teachers. This improvement plan is part of the annual NCLB Consolidated Grant.
- A 10 percent reserve of the school's 2004 Title I funds must be dedicated for professional development.
- All students are offered intradistrict public school choice. A 20 percent reserve of the district's 2004 Title I funds must be dedicated for this purpose.

As soon as the 2003 state assessment data is analyzed, you will be notified of the results. At that time, you will then have the opportunity to review the data upon which this determination was made and appeal your status if either the 2002 or 2003 data is in error.

This preliminary advisory will allow you to review local data and conduct a self-assessment which may enable you to carry out some preplanning or contingency planning activities.

If you have any questions or need further information about the accountability system and its requirements, please contact Linda Dold-Collins, director, Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability at (609) 943-4283.

IRB/LDC/sjm

Attachment

c: William L. Librera  
Dwight Pfennig  
Gloria Hancock  
Senior Staff  
Linda Dold-Collins  
County Superintendents